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30 August 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group, 30 August 1962

PRESENT: General Taylor, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Gilpatric, General Carter, General Lemnitzer, and Mr. Bundy

Colonel Steakley was present for Items 1 -3.

Mr. ?ford Herbert was present for Items 4-6.

1. Reconnaissance

A. DOD Peripheral Flights

The peripheral flights were approved as presented. It was noted that LOLLY would involve only a single aircraft as opposed to the previous two plane flights in this area. As to LUCETTE and MICHELE, it was pointed out that these flights would not be flown while the Soviet nuclear test prohibited zone was still in effect. In response to a question from Mr. Johnson as to why these flights were 40 rather than 50 miles off the coast, Colonel Steakley said that the distance selected was a variable, depending on the purpose of the flight and other conditions.

B. Laos

General Taylor asked if anyone cared to reopen this matter. Mr. Gilpatric presented the Defense position. In view of the Soviet transport aircraft stand down and the indications that the Communists were at least going through the motions of carrying out the agreement, Defense was in favor of not reopening the matter until the 75 day withdrawal period was over and an evaluation had been made of the degree of Communist compliance. General Lemnitzer, while willing to take the risk of waiting, said he would like to make it clear that from the military point of view it was most important that we have good information on Communist activities. These flights are our prime source of hard information. The consensus of the Group was that this subject would not be reopened until after the 75 day withdrawal period was over.

C. Overflights of South Laos

(1) Colonel Steakley pointed out that there was one problem in connection with a flat prohibition on photo flights over Laos. At present, RF-101's based in Thailand must overfly the southern panhandle

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enroute to execute missions in South Vietnam. He proposed that the general policy be modified to permit high altitude overflights (35,000 feet) to and from South Vietnam, by planes based in Thailand. It was brought out that the average activity level was about two missions about every three days. There was agreement that photo reconnaissance in general against guerrilla targets was difficult but that this made it all the more important to do all that we can. These flights are essentially covert; as current agreements preclude the filing of flight plans for photo aircraft. Mr. Johnson said that the Department was willing to go along with this activity, but felt that the matter had to be reviewed by higher authority due to his very explicit previous instructions to the contrary. The Group's decision to approve this specific exception to the prohibition against photo flights over Laos was later reported to higher authority.

(2) In discussing the matter above, the desirability of redeploying the aircraft to South Vietnam was mentioned. This matter was referred to Defense for further examination. It was also recognized that the South Vietnamese might well be given some indigenous capability for photo reconnaissance. It was also suggested that possible Laos overflights, after the 75 day period had elapsed, might well be put in the standard overflight category rather than being handled as a separate item.

D. The ELINT flights from Thailand were discussed and approved with the understanding that they would use the specific routes indicated.

E. The Agency's monthly forecast was reviewed and noted. All of the flights contained therein had been previously approved. General Carter mentioned that there might be an additional requirement for flights over Cuba.

F. The destroyer surveillance mission DESOTO was discussed and approved. It was pointed out that the ship generally operates 20 miles offshore, but closes to 12 miles under certain conditions. The Group requested that they be informed if any of the various ELINT operations picked up unusual indications.

G. The Group reviewed certain submarine activities and approved them as presented.

2. <u>Resupply of the Meos</u>

General Carter raised the question of exactly how approval should be obtained for arms and ammunition resupply missions to the Meos. It was agreed that this was a matter for consultation between the Department of State and CIA, and need not be referred to the Group for decision.

3. Soviet Signal Intelligence Ships

The Group considered an outline plan for "communication" with Communist crews. The general consensus was that this plan did not fall within the purview of the Special Group. It was referred back to JCS for further development. The matter will be discussed at a State-JCS meeting to be held in the near future. Mr. Gilpatric also expressed interest in seeing a more detailed development of the concept. Mr. Bundy pointed out that we should be careful where such activities are pursued. Generally speaking, they should be limited to the high seas or international air space. General Carter raised the point that this concept should not be stretched to include defection operations on land. This is a highly skilled operation which requires special attention and control. The Group took no particular position for or against the concept in referring it back to Defense.

4. Chile

The Group reviewed the two Agency papers. Mr. Johnson stressed the necessity for concealing U.S. participation in this operation and also expressed some concern about the possibility of the Radicals pulling out prematurely and bringing the government down. The Agency mentioned the desirability of policy-level conversations with suitable Chileans so that they would be aware of the future political arrangements which it is felt would be to the common interests of Chile and the United States. The Group approved the recommendation in paragraph 5 on page 7.

5. Dominican Republic

The Group noted this paper. General Carter urged the Department of State to continue to press the interim government on the desirability of holding early elections.

6. Panama

Mr. Johnson said that State concurred in the general thrust of this paper, but would like to limit the continuation of the program to a three-month period during which time it would be reviewed in detail by State and CIA. The Group approved the proposal with this reservation.

7. General Lemnitzer stated that Mr. McCone had called him and posed a possible requirement for low-level photography of critical Cuban targets. General Lemnitzer said that from the military point of view this was feasible, utilizing either RF-101 or F8U aircraft flown by U.S. pilots from various bases or carriers in the Caribbean area. The

use of Cuban pilots would involve a delay of some months due to the precise training required. General Carter pointed out that we are accused daily of overflights in any case and that the possibility of Cuban protests should not dissuade us from making these flights if they are necessary. It was pointed out that other types of photography, while useful in pinpointing critical targets, does not give sufficient detail for precise identification of certain types of equipment. After some discussion, the Group agreed to take cognizance of this matter and requested that it be reopened at an appropriate time when specific targets and information needs could be identified.

8. It was agreed that the Agency would present a paper concerning Action Against North Vietnam at next week's meeting.

* * * *

General Taylor did not have an opportunity to review these minutes prior to his departure.

Julian J. Ewell
Colonel, USA

Distribution
- Mr. Johnson
- Mr. Gilpatric
- General Carter
- General Taylor